

Congressman Rodriguez Testifies on District 23 Priorities before the House Committee on the Budget

Last week, I had the privilege to testify before the House Committee on the Budget and present some of the top priorities for the 23rd Congressional District of Texas. While there are many aspects of the President's proposed budget that require extensive debate, the topics I testified on to the Committee included below, are some of the top issues for 23rd District. As the Budget Committee continues to work on drafting the blueprints for this year's Federal funding, I will continue to fight for these and all programs in Congress that matter to District 23. To see a video of my testimony before the House Committee on the Budget, visit my website at <http://rodriguez.house.gov>.

Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC)

Military installations across the region including San Antonio, Del Rio, and El Paso, are expected to bring an unprecedented economic boom to the entire 23rd District. For example, San Antonio will provide healthcare and medical training for the Department of Defense as a result of BRAC. Any delay or underfunding can increase future construction costs at all BRAC projects in the 23rd District. I asked the committee to fully fund the BRAC recommendations and ensure BRAC construction is completed in a timely manner.

US-Mexico Border Program

The US-Mexico Border Program at the Environmental Protection Agency funds the Project Development Assistance Program and Border Environment Infrastructure Fund. The President's request for the US Mexico Program account fulfills only 5% of the program needs. The US-Mexico Border program leverages \$2 dollars for every \$1 of federal funds. Many small, rural communities along the border rely on programs like the US-Mexico Border Program to provide assistance with critical infrastructure improvements, and I encouraged the committee to recommend a significant increase in this program.

International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC)

A recent routine safety inspection found that four dams operated and maintained by IBWC were unsafe. While IBWC does not believe there is immediate danger, continued neglect could lead to disrepair and danger. IBWC has estimated the costs to rehabilitate dam infrastructure around \$30 million. One of the projects in need of repair is the Amistad Dam in Del Rio. Amistad National Recreational Area is the United States portion of International Amistad Reservoir created by the dam. This National Park hosts over a million tourists a year and, as many of you know, is home to some of the best bass fishing in the world. Despite extensive infrastructure challenges at the Amistad Dam, the President requested only \$1 million for dam rehabilitation at the IBWC. I recommended the Committee recommend funding IBWC at a more practical level, so we can start to make critically needed dam infrastructure investments along the border.

Local Reimbursements in the Department of Justice Budget

Southwest Border Prosecutor Initiative and the State Criminal Alien Assistance Program reimburses State, county, and other jurisdictions for costs incurred undertaking a federal responsibility such as prosecuting federal cases or incarceration of federal criminal aliens. The

reimbursement that is received is only a fraction of the costs that our local communities are incurring. The President's budget has cut down the Southwest Border Prosecutors program and eliminated funding for State Criminal Alien Assistance Program every year. I recommended to the Committee that the federal government needs to pay for its responsibilities and not place their burden on local governments.

Cattle Fever Tick Eradication Program

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Services at USDA operates a program to eradicate cattle fever ticks from cattle in South and West Texas. Fever ticks, native to Mexico and spread from white-tailed deer to cattle, are devastating to the border cattle industry. The President's cut in USDA fever tick resources translates into an increased strain on local resources and the cattle industry of Texas. In my testimony, I encouraged the Committee to fully fund the Cattle Fever Tick Eradication Program at USDA so places like Maverick County can have the resources they need to fight back.

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